

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Claim 1. (Currently Amended) A method for inhibiting the degradation of activation of a substance degrading brain natriuretic peptide in a specimen, which comprises

~~placing~~ collecting the specimen containing brain natriuretic peptide into a container, wherein the face coming into contact with the specimen is made of or coated with a material selected from the group consisting of silicone and plastics, and

excluding the addition of any inhibiting agents,

by which the ratio of residual BNP immunoreactivity is 50% or more after 24 hours standing at 25°C.

Claim 2. (Canceled).

Claim 3. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said specimen is obtained from a human, dog, pig, rat or mouse.

Claim 4. (Canceled).

Claim 5. (Canceled).

Claim 6. (Currently Amended) A method for measuring brain natriuretic peptides in a specimen, which comprises

~~placing~~ collecting the specimen containing brain natriuretic peptides into a container, wherein the face coming into contact with the specimen is made of or coated with a material selected from the group consisting of silicone and plastics, and  
excluding the addition of any inhibiting agents; and

measuring the mammalian natriuretic peptides by standard means, wherein the ratio of residual BNP immunoreactivity is 50% or more after 24 hours standing at 25°C.

Claims 7-11. (Canceled).

Claim 12. (Currently Amended) A method for inhibiting the degradation of ~~activation of a substance degrading~~ brain natriuretic peptide in whole blood or blood plasma, which comprises

~~placing~~ collecting the whole blood or blood plasma into a container, wherein the face coming into contact with the whole blood or blood plasma is made of or coated with a material selected

from the group consisting of silicone and plastics, and  
excluding the addition of any inhibiting agents,  
by which the ratio of residual BNP immunoreactivity is 50% or  
more after 24 hours standing at 25°C.

Claim 13. (Currently Amended) A method for inhibiting the  
~~degradation of~~ activation of a substance degrading brain  
natriuretic peptide in a specimen, ~~consisting of~~ which comprises  
~~placing~~ collecting the specimen containing brain natriuretic  
peptide into a container, wherein the face coming into contact with  
the specimen is made of or coated with a material selected from the  
group consisting of silicone and plastics, and  
excluding the addition of any inhibiting agents,  
by which the ratio of residual BNP immunoreactivity is 50% or  
more after 24 hours standing at 25°C.